

Proposed changes to the Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups (ASCRG)

This document details the changes to the ASCRG that the ABS is proposing to make as an outcome of the current review. These changes include:

- The identification of new groups at the Broad Group (one-digit), Narrow Group (two-digit) and Religious Group (four-digit) levels;
- The retirement of one religious group; and
- A revised coding structure across the entire classification. In the proposed structure, Broad Groups have two-digit codes; Narrow Groups have four-digit codes and Religious Groups have six-digit codes. A concordance between the current and proposed new structure is provided in the spreadsheet [Coding Structure Concordance \(current codes mapped to proposed codes\)](#) linked at the bottom of this document.

These proposed changes have been developed through consultation with stakeholders, analysis of 2011, 2016, and 2021 Census data, research and the classification criteria ([Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2016 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)). The objectives of these changes are: to more accurately reflect the groups to which Australian have a religious affiliation; to improve the usability of the classification; to streamline the coding structure; and to better accommodate new groups over time.

The changes the ABS is proposing to make to the following groups are outlined below. No other changes are proposed at this time, pending feedback through this round of consultation:

[Buddhism](#)
[Christianity](#)
[Islam](#)
[Sikhism](#)
[Other Religions](#)

BUDDHISM

It is proposed that three new Religious Groups are created under the Buddhism Broad Group and the Buddhism Narrow Group:

CURRENT STRUCTURE

1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2016

Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
1		
Buddhism		
	101 Buddhism	
		1011 Buddhism

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2024

Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
15 Buddhism		
	1511 Buddhism	
		151111 Mahayana Buddhism
		151112 Theravada Buddhism
		151113 Vajrayana Buddhism

CHRISTIANITY

There are two changes proposed within the Christianity Broad Group:

1. That one new Religious Group be created under the Narrow Group Catholic (proposed code 2514), Syriac Catholic (proposed code 251414). The Religious groups in this Narrow group have also been reordered (in alphabetical order):

CURRENT STRUCTURE

1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2016

Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
1 Christianity		
	207 Catholic	
		2071 Western Catholic
		2072 Maronite Catholic
		2073 Melkite Catholic
		2074 Ukrainian Catholic
		2075 Chaldean Catholic
		2076 Syro Malabar Catholic
		2079 Catholic, nec

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2024

Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
25 Christianity		
	2514 Catholic	
		251411 Chaldean Catholic
		251412 Maronite Catholic
		251413 Melkite Catholic
		251414 Syriac Catholic
		251415 Syro Malabar Catholic
		251416 Ukrainian Catholic
		251417 Western Catholic
		251499 Catholic, nec

2. That one Religious Group, Albanian Orthodox, be retired and included in the Eastern Orthodox Not Elsewhere Classified (nec, proposed code 252399) group:

CURRENT STRUCTURE

1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2016

Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
2		Christianity
	223	Eastern Orthodox
	2231	Albanian Orthodox
	2232	Antiochian Orthodox
	2233	Greek Orthodox
	2234	Macedonian Orthodox
	2235	Romanian Orthodox
	2236	Russian Orthodox
	2237	Serbian Orthodox
	2238	Ukrainian Orthodox
	2239	Eastern Orthodox, nec

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2024

Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
25		Christianity
	2523	Eastern Orthodox
	252311	Antiochian Orthodox
	252312	Greek Orthodox
	252313	Macedonian Orthodox
	252314	Romanian Orthodox
	252315	Russian Orthodox
	252316	Serbian Orthodox
	252317	Ukrainian Orthodox
	252399	Eastern Orthodox, nec (including Albanian Orthodox)

ISLAM

It is proposed that three new Narrow Groups and six new Religious Groups are created under the Islam Broad Group:

CURRENT STRUCTURE

1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2016

Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
4 Islam		
	401 Islam	
		4011 Islam

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2024

Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
45 Islam		
	4511 Shia	
		451111 Shia
	4512 Sunni	
		451211 Sunni
	4513 Other Islam	
		451311 Ahmadiyya
		451312 Alawite
		451313 Alevi
		451399 Islam, nec

SIKHISM

It is proposed that Sikhism be moved out of Other Religions (Broad Group 6) and a new Broad Group be created for Sikhism:

CURRENT STRUCTURE 1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2016			PROPOSED STRUCTURE 1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2024		
Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group	Broad Group	Narrow group	Religious Group
6 Other Religions			65 Sikhism		
	615 Sikhism			6511 Sikhism	
		6151 Sikhism			651111 Sikhism

OTHER RELIGIONS

It is proposed that one new group, Kirat Mundham (proposed code 851815), be added to Narrow Group 8518 (proposed new code) Miscellaneous Religions. In addition, Religious Groups in this Narrow Group have been reordered (in alphabetical order):

CURRENT STRUCTURE			PROPOSED STRUCTURE		
1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2016			1266.0 Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups, 2024		
Broad Group	Narrow Group	Religious Group	Broad Group	Narrow Group	Religious Group
6 Other Religions			85 Other Religions		
	69 Miscellaneous Religions			8518 Miscellaneous Religions	
		6901 Mandaean			851811 Caodaism
		6902 Yezidi			851812 Church of Scientology
		6991 Caodaism			851813 Eckankar
		6992 Church of Scientology			
		6993 Eckankar			851814 Jainism
		6994 Rastafari			851815 Kirat Mundham
		6995 Satanism			851816 Mandaean
		6996 Theosophy			851817 Rastafari
		6997 Jainism			851818 Satanism
		6998 Zoroastrianism			851821 Theosophy
		6999 Religious Groups, nec			851822 Yezidi
					851823 Zoroastrianism
					851899 Religious Groups, nec

Coding Structure Concordance (current codes mapped to proposed codes)

Attached is a mapping between the current coding structure in ASCRG (2016) and the proposed coding structure 2024. The key changes to the coding structure are:

- Broad Groups are indicated by two digits in the new structure; instead of one digit.
- Narrow Groups are indicated by four digits in the new structure; instead of two or three digits.
- Religious Groups are indicated by six digit codes in the new structure; instead of four digit codes.

New groups have been added in the Buddhism, Christian, Islam and Other Religions Broad groups, and are highlighted in **bold orange text**.

In addition, Religious Groups in the following Narrow Groups (by proposed code) have also been reordered (in alphabetical order):

- 2514 Catholic
- 2532 Other Christian
- 8518 Miscellaneous Religions

In the spreadsheet below, the proposed new structure is provided (i.e. codes and their associated Religious Group). The new structure is aligned with the current structure (ASCRG, 2016), so individual groups are easy to find.



Mapping of current
to proposed ASCRG